BELMAR, NJ[1]
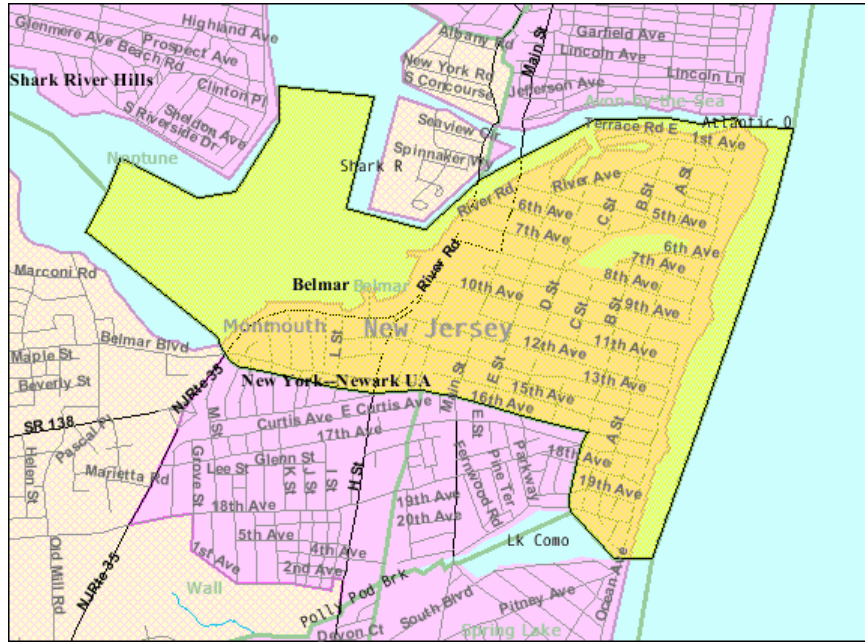Community Profile[2]

PEOPLE AND PLACES
Regional orientation

The borough of Belmar, New Jersey (40.18°N, 74.02°W) is located along the Jersey Shore facing the Atlantic Ocean to the east, with Shark River on the north and west sides of the community (USGS 2008).

Map 1. Location of Belmar, New Jersey (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

Members of the Lenni Lenape tribe used the area around Belmar from spring through fall as fishing and hunting grounds. It is believed that Henry Hudson was the first European to see Belmar, judging from some of his descriptions. In 1872, a group of 25 men decided to create a summer resort just south of Shark River, because of the area's fishing and its relative isolation. The community was originally known as Ocean Beach, but the name was changed in 1885 to Belmar, Italian for "beautiful sea." There were more than seventeen hotels in operation here before 1890 (Roper 2008). By the early 1900s, this community was a premier resort destination in the Northeast (NJ Shore nd). Today Belmar is a popular destination for beach-goers, and the borough's population swells to over 60,000 in the summer months (Borough of Belmar 2008).

---

[1] These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

[2] For purposes of citation please use the following template: "Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov."

Belmar is one of the biggest surf spots on the East Coast; they hold surfing competitions here every year (Borough of Belmar 2008).

Demographics[3]

According to Census 2000 data,[4] Belmar had a total population of 6,045, up 2.6% from the reported population of 5,877 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this total in 2000, 50.0% were female and 50.0% were male. The median age was 38.5 years and 80.2% of the population was 21 years or older while 17.9% were 62 or older.

The population structure for Belmar (see Figure 1) shows a young population, with the largest percentages of residents between the ages 30-39, followed by 40-49 and 20-29. Despite the large number of residents in these two age categories, there were few children in the 0-9 and 10-19 age categories. Unlike many fishing towns, Belmar did not experience a decline in residents for the 20-29 age category, but saw a large increase in residents of this age group over the 10-19 age group. Also interesting is the high percentage of males over females for the 30-39 age group.
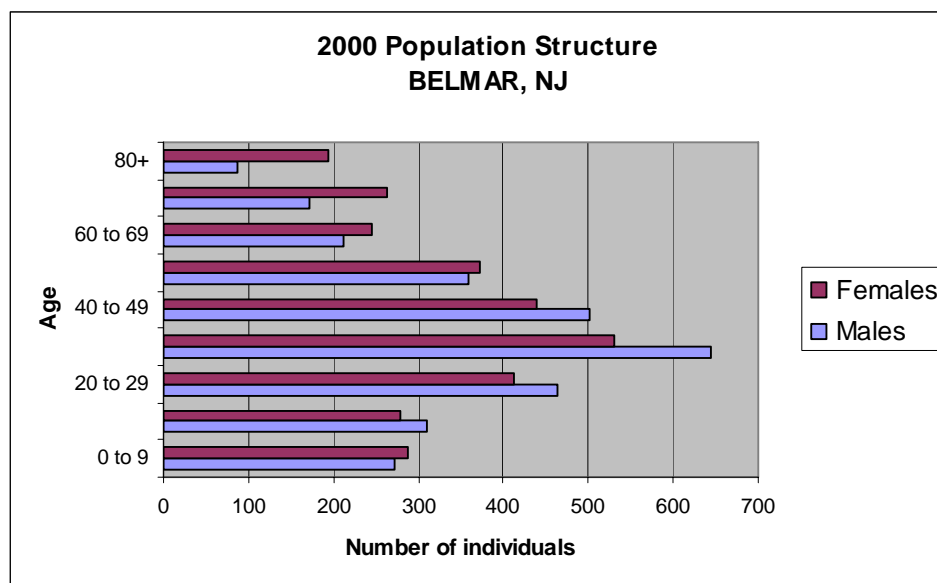
Figure 1. Population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The majority of the population of Belmar was white (91.4%), with 4.1% of residents black or African American, 0.6% Native American, 1.2% Asian, and no residents listed as Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 6.8% of the total population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their heritage to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (35.2%), Italian (19.3%), German (16.9%), and English (7.2%). With regard to region of birth, 70.4% were born in New Jersey, 20.2% were born in a different state and 8.6% were born outside of the U.S. (including 5.9% who were not United States citizens).

---

[3] While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.
[4] These and all census data, unless otherwise referenced, can be found at http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html; census data used are for Belmar borough

2000 Racial Structure
BELMAR, NJ

Black
4.1%

Native
0.6%

White
91.4%

Pacific Islander
0.0%

Other
2.6%

Asian
1.2%
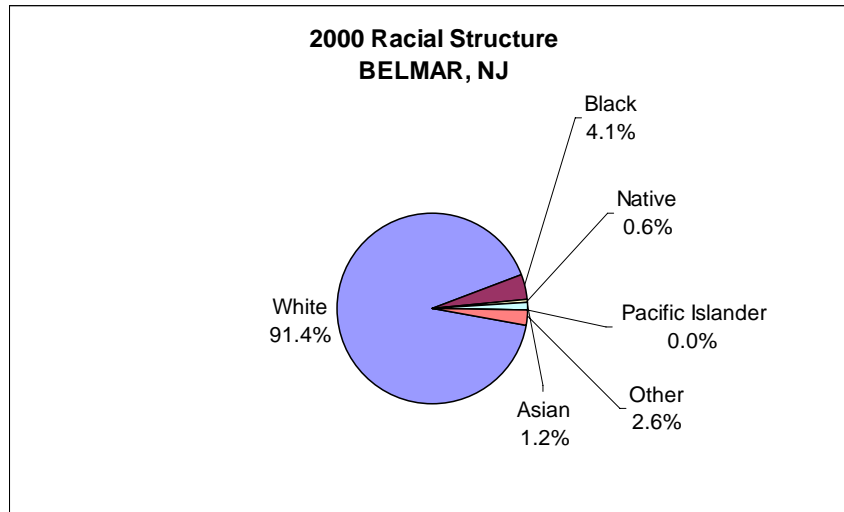
Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

2000 Ethnic Structure
BELMAR, NJ

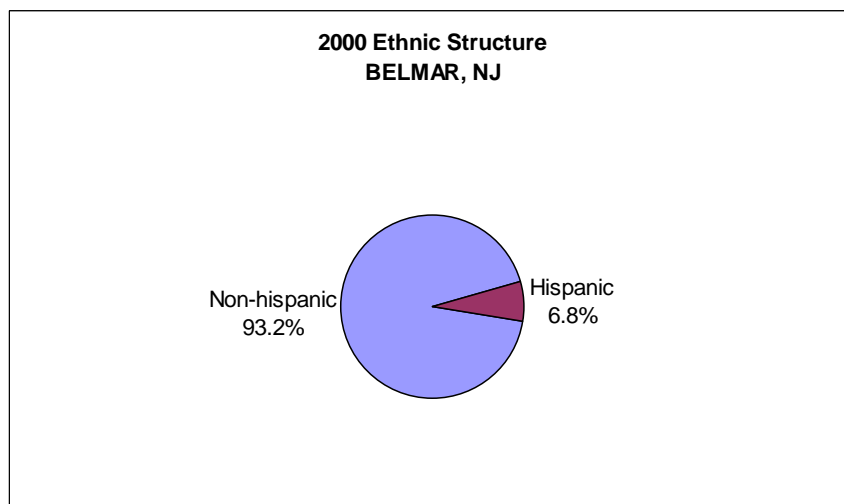Non-hispanic
93.2%

Hispanic
6.8%

Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 89.0% of the population 5 years old and higher, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 11.0% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, and including 5.6% of the population who spoke English less than "very well."

Of the population 25 years and over, 89.3% were high school graduates or higher and 34.0% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 4.7% did not reach ninth grade, 6.0% attended some high school but did not graduate, 25.4% completed high school, 22.9% had some college with no degree, 6.9% received their associate degree, 22.1% earned their bachelor's degree, and 11.9% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religious percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data (ARDA) Archive in 2000 the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Monmouth County was Catholic with 50 congregations and 289,183 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Jewish (42 with 65,000 adherents), United Methodist (47 with 12,992 adherents), and Muslim (5 with 9,455 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion increased 38.9% from 1990 to 2000 (ARDA 2000).

The borough of Belmar lists seven houses of worship, of which one is Catholic, one is Jewish, and the other five are Protestant (Borough of Belmar 2008).

Issues/Processes

Belmar has traditionally been a community full of summer rentals, with young people coming to stay for short periods of time, but the demographics here are changing as more older people are buying property for second homes to be used all summer, or to live in year round (Fallon 2006). Some fishermen used to harvest clams from the Shark River, but now it is usually closed because of pollution. State officials opened it temporarily to clamming in the winter of 2003 when Sandy Hook Bay was frozen over and fishermen could not work there (Feeney 2003). Local anglers are very concerned about management plans to reduce existing quotas for fluke by close to 80 percent. Those who run sportfishing charter operations are worried this could put them out of business; others complain that new size restrictions on fluke will change fluke fishing from a family activity to purely a trophy sport (Geiser 2006).

Cultural attributes

In 2006 Belmar hosted the 20th Annual New Jersey Seafood Festival, which was expected to draw over 100,000 visitors. The festival highlights Belmar's scenic waterfront and features dozens of New Jersey's top seafood restaurants (Borough of Belmar 2008). The Belmar Fishing Club is one of the few fishing piers in Monmouth County remaining from the 19th century (BCC nd).

INFRASTRUCTURE
Current Economy

While there are no other large employers listed for Belmar, neighboring communities such as Neptune (4 miles), Tinton Falls (11 miles), and West Long Branch (9.5 miles) have a number of significant employers, including: Meridian Health System (Neptune – 7,600 employees), Asbury Park Press (Neptune – 1,300 employees), Monmouth University (West Long Branch – 1,200 employees), Norkus Enterprises, Inc. (Point Pleasant – 1,100 employees), CPC Behavioral Healthcare (Neptune – 435 employees), and Patock Construction (Tinton Falls – 101 employees). There are many other large employers throughout Monmouth County where Belmar residents might be employed (Monmouth County nd).

According to the U.S. Census 2000[5], 68.5% (3,499 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 3.3% were unemployed, 0.1% were in the Armed Forces, and 65.1% were employed.

---

[5] Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

2000 Employment Structure
BELMAR, NJ

Unemployed
3.3%

Employed
65.1%

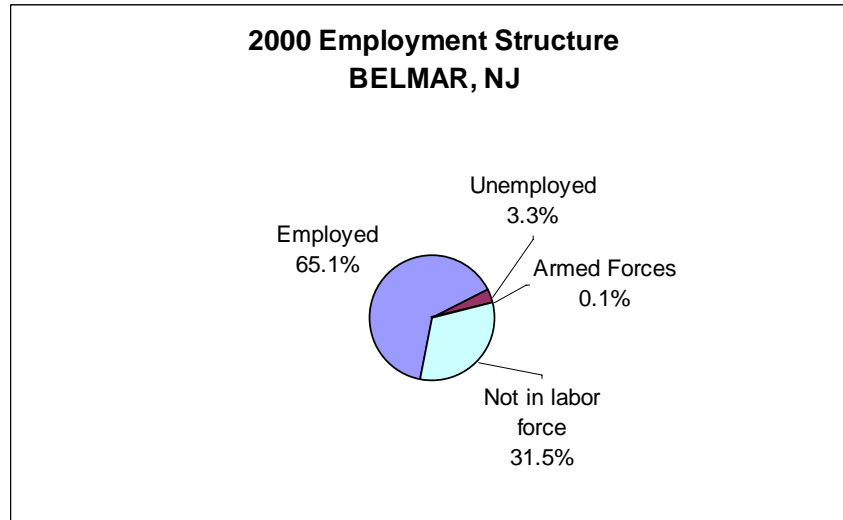Armed Forces
0.1%

Not in labor
force
31.5%

Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for zero positions or 0.0% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 234 positions or 7.0 % of jobs. Educational, health, and social services (20.8%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (12.6%), retail trade (11.6%), and arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (9.9%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Belmar was $44,896 (up 41.8% from $31,667 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was $29,456. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 18.2% more per year than females.

The average family in Belmar consisted of 2.92 persons. With respect to poverty, 4.5% of families (down from 6.7% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 8.6% of individuals were below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is $8,794 for individuals and ranges from $11,239 through $35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000b). In 2000, 22.3% of all families of any size earned less than $35,000 per year.

In 2000, Belmar had a total of 3,996 housing units, of which 73.7% were occupied and 49.3% were detached one-unit homes. Less than one tenth (8.9%) of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes accounted for 0.2% of the total housing units; 88.5% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was $186,700. Of vacant housing units, 69.4% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, while of occupied units 52.5% were renter occupied.

Residential property values in Belmar saw the 7th highest growth out of 566 New Jersey municipalities between 2000 and 2004 (Borough of Belmar 2008).

Government

Belmar is a borough within Monmouth County. Belmar is governed by a mayor, who serves a four-year term, and four council members elected to three-year terms. The mayor serves as the chief executive officer of the municipality and chairs the council meetings; although he votes as a council member he cannot veto a council vote (Borough of Belmar 2008). This is known as the Small Municipality Plan of Government under the Faulkner Act (NJSLM nd).

Fisheries involvement in government
Belmar has a Harbor Commission which is responsible for Belmar Marina, as well as a harbormaster (Borough of Belmar 2008).

Institutional
Fishing associations
The Belmar Fishing Club is a private, members-only fishing club with a pier and club house located on the Shark River. The club hosts tournaments and other fishing-related events. The Shark River Surf Anglers Association, located in Belmar, is a salt-water fishing club dedicated to striped bass, and hosts a number of fishing tournaments.
The Garden State Seafood Association in Trenton is a statewide organization of commercial fishermen and fishing companies, related businesses and individuals working in common cause to promote the interests of the commercial fishing industry and seafood consumers in New Jersey.
The Jersey Coast Anglers Association (JCAA) is an association of over 75 saltwater fishing clubs throughout the state. Founded in 1981, the purpose of the organization is to unite and represent marine sport anglers to work towards common goals. The JCAA website (www.jcaa.org) also provides links for many NJ anglers associations.

Fishery assistance centers
Information on fishery assistance centers in Belmar was unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing related institutions
The Shark River Cleanup Coalition is a non-profit organization working to improve and protect the water and habitat quality of the Shark River Estuary, and to preserve its commercial and recreational uses.

Physical
Belmar has train service to New York City through New Jersey Transit (Belmar Chamber of Commerce nd), as well as bus service to Philadelphia and Asbury Park (NJ Transit nd). Belmar is 7 miles from Brielle, 9 miles from Point Pleasant, 24 miles from Belford, 75 miles from Atlantic City, and 61 miles from New York City by car. Routes 35 and 71 run through Belmar, and Route 138 runs between the community and the Garden State Parkway. Newark Liberty International Airport is 37 miles away (MapQuest nd), and the Monmouth Executive Airport is just outside of Belmar in Farmingdale.
The commercial and recreational vessels in Belmar are located in the protected Shark River Inlet. There are three drawbridges over the inlet, which open to allow the vessels to pass through (Roberts 2003). Belmar Marina, the borough's municipal marina, claims to have "New Jersey's largest charter fishing fleet." The marina also has a boat ramp, bait and tackle shop, fishing pier, and boat rentals. It is located on the north side of town, along the Shark River Inlet (BCC nd).

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES[6]
Commercial

From the landings data, Belmar appears to have a significant commercial fishing fleet, but they do not appear to be very active. There were 24 home ported vessels listed for Belmar in 2001, which fell to 15 by 2006 (see Table 2). The value of landings for home port vessels was at its highest in 2006. It seems that most Belmar vessels land their catch elsewhere; the port had a relatively low level of landings in most years. Several years saw no landings for Belmar. The most valuable species landed in Belmar on average for 1997-2006 was lobster, followed by scallops (see Table 1). The value of scallops in 2006 far exceeded that of lobster, however, and landings of both in 2006 were significantly larger than the average values for 1997-2006. There are also a few vessel owners in Belmar, but it is apparent that the vast majority of those with vessels home ported in Belmar live elsewhere.

Bluefin tuna are sometimes taken on charter vessels, and often the captains will keep and sell the tuna caught by passengers (NJ Fishing nd). Klein's Fish Market, which also includes a restaurant, sushi bar, and gift shop, does offload and sell some locally-caught seafood (Saferstein 2008). In the past, clamming took place in the Shark River, which has more recently been closed to harvesting because of pollution (Feeney 2003).

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Scallop	2
Other[7]	3
Bluefish	4
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	5

(Note: Only rank value is provided because value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels or fewer than three dealers, or where one dealer predominates in a particular species and would therefore be identifiable.)

---

[6] In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

[7] "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

Vessels by Year[8]

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	21	3
1998	16	3
1999	20	3
2000	21	3
2001	24	5
2002	23	4
2003	22	3
2004	19	3
2005	15	3
2006	15	3

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport
 # Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence[9])

Recreational

Recreational fishing is a very popular activity in Belmar, with a number of charter and party boat businesses, as well as fishing opportunities from shore and from a number of piers (BCC nd). Between 2001- 2005, there were 26 charter and party vessels making 6,324 total trips registered in logbook data by charter and party vessels in Belmar carrying a total of 183,251 anglers (NMFS VTR data). Belmar Marina claims to have "New Jersey's largest charter fishing fleet" (BCC nd). One website lists a dozen party boats in Belmar (New Jersey Shore nd). The Miss Belmar Princess is a party boat offering day trips for bluefish, stripers, sea bass, and fluke, as well as overnight trips to the Hudson Canyon for bluefin tuna fishing. Blackfish, ling cod, and weakfish are also commonly caught around Belmar (NJ Fishing nd). The Shark River Charter Boat Association is a group of small charter boats in Belmar and surrounding communities. Competition among the party boats is so stiff that crew members from each boat are sent out to the parking lot to recruit passengers from the many fishermen who show up at the marina each day, looking for a boat to take them out. The Fisherman's Den, located in the Belmar Marina, is a large bait and tackle shop which also offers boat rentals. The Belmar Fishing Club has one of the few fishing piers in Monmouth County remaining from the 19th century (BCC nd).

In New Jersey, the charter/party fleet is the largest on east coast. Many vessels are over 120 ft long and carry over 150 people.[10]

---

[8] Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

[9] The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

[10] Community Review Comments, Bruce Freeman, NJ Coast Anglers Association, October 2, 2007

Subsistence
Information on subsistence fishing in Belmar was either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE
In 2003 the borough council adopted the Seaport Redevelopment Plan to revitalize the waterfront in the north part of Belmar along the Shark River, to rejuvenate the commercial district and develop the tax base. There is a linked project, the Transit Village study area, identified by the New Jersey Department of Transportation as a transit hub in need of development, which collectively are known as the Seaport Village Redevelopment Area (Borough of Belmar 2008). The state is working to repair the Route 35 bridge which runs through town, and this will include a pedestrian walkway across the bridge and linking the marina to the Seaport Village area. The municipal Belmar Marina is in the final stages of a $10 million renovation, which includes new docks for both the commercial party boat and charter boat fleets, dredging activity, a fishing pier, new slips, and a mile-long riverwalk (Borough of Belmar 2008). The Seaport Redevelopment Plan uses the idea of a New England fishing village as its model for the Belmar waterfront (Roberts 2003).

REFERENCES
Association of Religion Data Archive (ARDA). 2000. Interactive Maps and Reports, Counties within one state [cited Oct 2005]. Available from: http://www.thearda.com/
Belmar Chamber of Commerce (BCC). nd. Official web site [cited Jul 2006].
http://www.belmarchamber.com/
Borough of Belmar. 2008. Official web site [cited Oct 2008]. Available at: http://belmar.com/
Fallon S. 2006. A tale of two very different Shore towns; Spring Lake close to Belmar only on map. The Record (Bergen County), 2006 May 28.
Feeney T. 2003. Clammers jump into Shark River. Star Ledger, 2003 Feb 3.
Geiser J. 2006. The fluke fishery battle is on. Asbury Park Press, 2006 Aug 4.
MapQuest. nd. Web site [cited Jul 2006]. Available at: http://www.mapquest.com
Monmouth County. nd. Economic Development: Major Employers [cited Jul 2006]. Available at: http://www.visitmonmouth.com/
New Jersey Fishing (NJ Fishing). nd. Web site [cited Jul 2006]. Available at:
http://www.fishingnj.org/
New Jersey State League of Municipalities {NJSLM). nd. Types and forms of New Jersey government [cited Oct 2008]. Available at: http://www.njslom.org/types.html
New Jersey Shore. nd. Belmar, New Jersey [cited Jul 2006]. Available at:
http://www.njbelmar.com
New Jersey Transit (NJ Transit). nd. Bus schedules [cited Jul 2006]. Available at:
http://www.njtransit.com/
Roberts DG. 2003. Seaport Redevelopment Program, Borough of Belmar, New Jersey: Redevelopment Plan [cited Jul 2006]. Available at:
http://www.belmar.com/default.asp?Section_ID=204
Roper G. 2008. History: The Borough of Belmar in retrospect [cited Oct 2008]. Available at: http://belmar.com/index.asp
Saferstein R. 2008. Seafood, in or out. NJ My Way, 2008 Mar 26.

US Census Bureau. 1990. 1990 Decennial Census [cited Jul 2008]. Available at:
    http://factfinder.census.gov/

US Census Bureau. 2000a. United States Census 2000 [cited July 2007]. Available from:
    http://www.census.gov/

US Census Bureau. 2000b. Poverty thresholds 2000 [cited June 2007]. Available from:
    http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/threshld/thresh00.html

US Geological Survey (USGS). 2008. US Board on Geographic Names: Geographic Names
    Information System (GNIS) [cited Sep 2008]. Available at:
    http://geonames.usgs.gov/pls/gnispublic/